

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION



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Seine River School Division
Transportation
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Wade Weimer
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Transportation Department

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

The Seine River School Division transports 2700 students in both urban and rural areas. In order to ensure a safe and efficient transportation system, it is everyone's responsibility to promote safety procedures that exercise care, caution, good manners and consideration for other people. With this in mind, general information concerning bus ridership is included in the following pages.

School bus safety starts at home. Parents or guardians are responsible for supervising their children to and from the school bus. We encourage you to always accompany your child to and from their neighborhood bus stop.

If, as parents or students, you have any problems concerning transportation in your area do not hesitate to call the transportation department or your school. We would be pleased to assist you.

What can a parent do about school bus safety?

A Parent Checklist:

- ◆ Commit to your (K-4) child – you should accompany them everyday to and from the school bus.
- ◆ Talk with your child regularly about school bus danger zones.
- ◆ Practice looking left, right and left again with your child before crossing all intersections and driveways.
- ◆ Make sure your child can be easily seen; dress your child in bright colored clothing; attach reflective material to their backpack.
- ◆ Shorten or remove any drawstrings that are longer than 6 inches when tied (make sure they are tied); better yet replace them with Velcro or buy clothing & backpacks without drawstrings.
- ◆ Store everything in your child's backpack and ensure it is securely closed. Never let your child carry anything that can be dropped near or under a bus. Ensure your child's teacher is insisting on the same.
- ◆ Remind your child regularly to never pick up anything near or under the bus without asking the driver what to do first.
- ◆ Have your child leave home in plenty of time to eliminate the last minute dashes that cause accidents, especially in inclement weather. Teach your child to tell and be responsible with time.
- ◆ Wait for your child on the same side of the street as the bus stop. Do not make your child cross the street to get to you. Children often forget pedestrian safety rules when they see their parents.
- ◆ Support school bus discipline. Teach your child their driver is the leader of the school bus safety team. Work with the school and driver if disciplinary problems are reported.



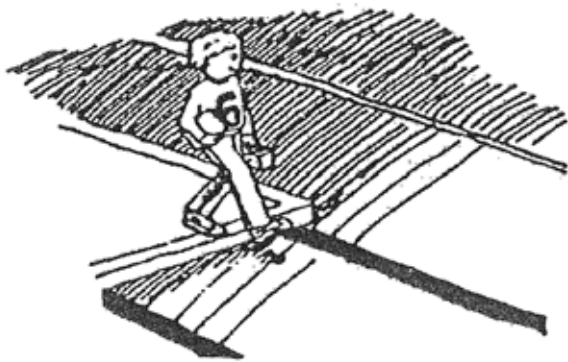
Bus stops

The transportation Department pre-assigns students to bus stops. Please ensure your child is familiar with the bus stop location prior to his/her first trip. The bus number is posted on both sides of the bus, front and back.

We ask parents to review the following with their children:

1. Arrival at pick-up point

Be on time for the bus. Leave home early. Walk quickly. *Arrive 5 minutes before the departure time. You can wait for the bus...the bus cannot wait for you!*



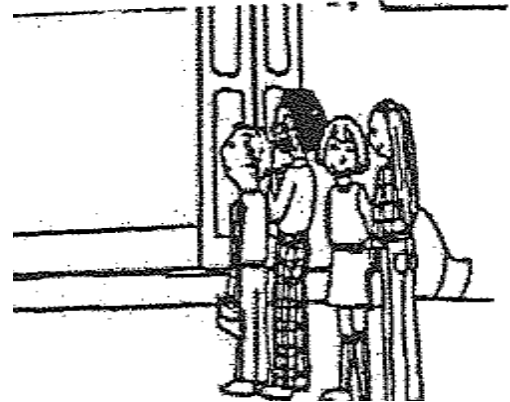
On your way, cross the street only at the corner. If there aren't any sidewalks, walk on the left facing cars. Never run into the street or road. Always look left and right and left again to make sure no cars are coming when you cross.

Stay away from the street when waiting for the bus. Always wait for the bus in a safe place, at least 2 meters from the curb. Be sure that there is space between you and the passing cars. Don't play tag around the bus stop, but stand quietly at the stop and wait for the bus to come. If other students are waiting at the bus stop, get in a line without pushing or jostling. While waiting for the bus, do not damage or trespass onto private property. Do not play on snow banks.



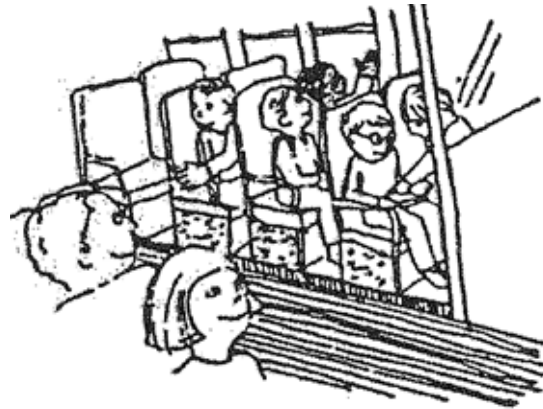
2. Boarding the bus

Line up in a single file in front of the bus door, at least 2 metres from the curb.



Wait until the driver opens the door before approaching the bus.

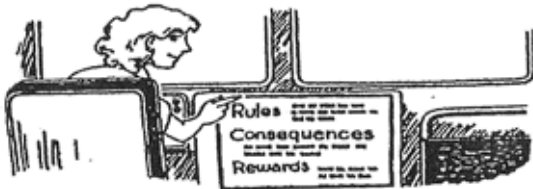
Wait your turn. Board the bus quickly without crowding or pushing. Always use the handrail this could save you from falling off the steps and into the street. Make sure you watch where you are stepping.



A seating plan is in effect at all times. Go directly to your assigned seat and sit straight, with your back firmly against the seat. The bus driver has the authority to reassign any seat.

All students must remain seated and facing forward.

3. Conduct on the bus



Follow all directions and safety procedures the first time they are given by the driver. Any behaviour that distracts the driver is a serious hazard to the safe operation of the bus, and as such, jeopardizes the safety of all passengers.

Once you are on the bus, sit down right away. Adhere to the seating plan at all times. Keep your books, parcels and musical instruments on your lap. Laws require the aisle to be kept clear at all times.



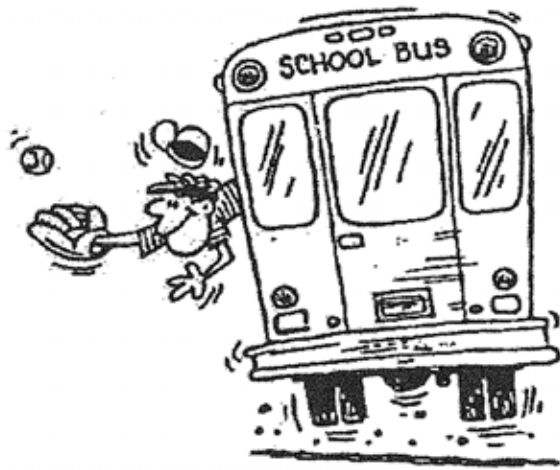
When you are traveling on the bus you may talk quietly with the people near you, but do not yell. Noisy children may distract the bus driver.

We ask the students to be in complete silence when the school bus is crossing a railroad crossing.



Never stick your hands, arms, head or feet out of the windows. Waving with an arm outside the bus is dangerous.

Do not touch the emergency door or exits or any part of the bus equipment.



The bus is neither a cafeteria nor a place to discard refuse. If you are hungry, eat at home or at school. Eating on a bus can be very dangerous due to the possibility of choking.



4. Getting off the bus



Always remain seated until the bus has reached its destination and comes to a complete stop.

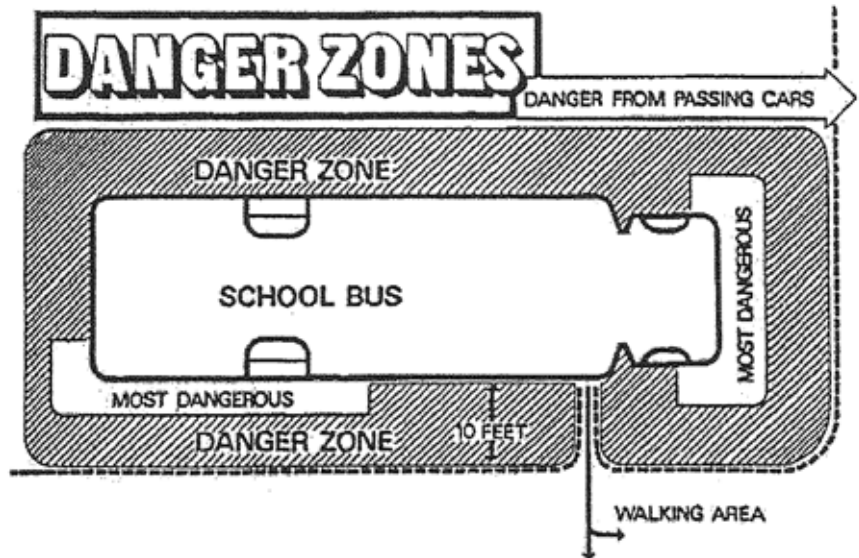
Don't push or shove while getting off. When you stop at school, let your classmates in the front of the bus get off first.

Always use the handrail.

5. Walking away from the bus

If you are not crossing the street, step directly away from the bus.

Do not walk alongside the bus at any time!



If anything falls underneath or in front of the bus, ***leave it – do not retrieve it. Step away from the bus and talk to the school bus driver.***

6. Crossing the street

Always wait at the curb, at least 3 metres in front of the bus so the driver can always see you. Cross at right angles, not diagonally. Never cross the road behind the school bus.

1. Wait for the driver's instruction before crossing.
2. When proceeding onto the roadway you also should always look left and right and left again.
3. Walk promptly across the road. Do not run.



IMPORTANT: If anything falls underneath or in front of the bus, **leave it – do not retrieve it. Step away from the bus and talk to the school bus driver.**

PARENTS: Wait for your child on the same side of the street as the bus stop. Do not make your child cross the street to get to you. Children often forget pedestrian safety rules when they see their parents. When accompanying your child, please reinforce the importance of our safety team by always waiting for and following all driver and bus patrol instructions.

Special requests, friends, special stops, notes, etc.

Students other than those approved for regular transportation are not permitted to ride the school bus. School bus drivers are not authorized to grant any parental requests. Students must only get on and off at their scheduled bus stop location. Notes from parents will not be accepted.

Carry-on items on the school bus

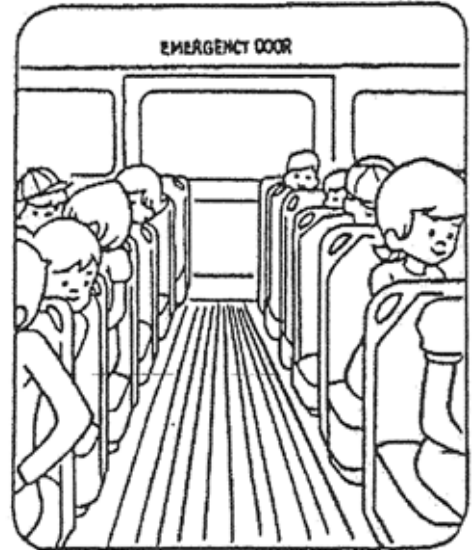
Items being carried on by students are limited to small articles that can be easily stored within the student's personal space (i.e. carried on the student's lap). Law requires that the centre aisle is to be kept clear at all times. (see Appendix 1).

Hockey sticks, curling brooms, ringette sticks, skis, skateboards, snowboards or other similar items are not allowed. Skates will be allowed only when the blades are enclosed in proper skate guards and stored in a carry-bag. Any balls must be carried in a bag.

Science fair backboards are not allowed.

Some musical instruments are allowed (see appendix 1). The following instruments must be held upright by the student:

- ◆ Trumpet / cornet (slim case),
- ◆ Trombone (narrow black case),
- ◆ Alto saxophone, guitar (soft case).



Assertive discipline

Students in the Seine River School Division who ride buses are subject to rules and regulations designed to provide safe transportation to and from school. We have a school bus code of conduct for bus riders. With this plan, students will know ahead of time what behaviour is expected of them and what consequences will occur if they do not behave. This program provides a common approach that everyone understands. Prior understanding of this plan leads to increased administrative and parental support when problems occur. Please reinforce with your child that their driver is the leader of the school bus safety team. Work with the school and driver if disciplinary problems are reported.



Rules

1. Follow all directions and safety procedures.
2. Stay in your seat. Sit properly. Keep hands and feet to yourself.
3. Speak in a low and respectful tone.
4. No food or drinks. Do not litter, write on or damage the bus in any way.
5. Do not swear, use rude gestures or tease others.



Rewards

Positive rewards take the form of frequent praise and recognition from the driver to the students.

- ◆ Greet students as they enter the bus with a few pleasant words.
- ◆ Praise students who are well behaved as they exit the bus.

Positives make students look forward to their ride on the bus.

Frequently asked questions

Very reasonably so, parents often have questions related to school bus transportation, whether about something as vital as safety or as commonplace as a forgotten pair of mittens on a bus. In order to be responsive to the needs of parents, the transportation department has assembled a list of frequently asked questions and their corresponding answers. We hope this is helpful in making you feel more comfortable with and aware of how your children are safely transported to and from school each day. Should you have any questions that are not addressed in this list, please feel free to contact the Transportation Department at (204) 422-6222.

Q. Who should I call if the bus does not arrive on time?

- A. Parents are first asked to make sure that the buses are operating and not cancelled due to poor weather or extreme cold. For more information on this, please check the divisional policy on bus cancellations. Normally, according to policy, we ask that your child be at the bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled arrival time. If after ten (10) minutes the bus has not yet arrived, you should call the transportation office at 422-6222.



Q. What are the hours of operation of the Transportation Department?

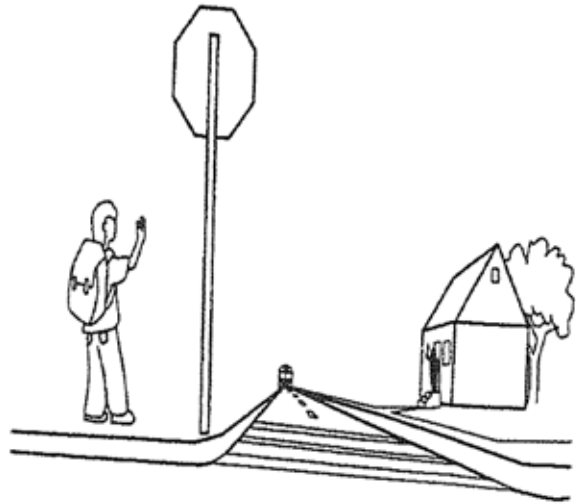
- A. The dispatch area is staffed from 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. every school day. Scheduling, administration, safety and training departments operate from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Q. Will my child have the same driver every day?

- A. Your child may have different drivers between the morning and afternoon routes. However, they will be consistent in those routes from day to day, with the exception of sick leave, leave of absence and employee turnover.

Q. Can the driver stop at my house to pick up or drop off my child?

- A. Drivers are not permitted to adjust routes, times or stops. Only certain students, whose needs are addressed through a Personal Transportation Plan, are eligible for door-to-door service. This service is typically restricted to students with certain disabilities. For other students, service is provided in accordance with provincial and divisional guidelines. Within these guidelines, every effort is made to improve route efficiency by clustering students to stops and, where possible, providing service on major streets.



Q. Can I require that my child only be released to me at the bus stop?

- A. For students, it is the parents/guardians who are responsible for meeting the bus if they deem it appropriate. It is not a requirement for the division, but the Transportation Department highly recommends it. Parents can request that their child must be met by a parent. This will be relayed to the driver.

Q. What happens if a parent doesn't meet his/her child at the stop?

- A. Upon reaching the stop, the bus driver will radio the dispatcher and request a call to the parent's residence. If there is no answer, the driver will be instructed to keep the child on board and continue with the route. After completion of the route, they will request another call and, if successful, will return to the original stop. If unsuccessful, the principal will be notified and the child will be returned to the school.

Also, should the parent be unable to meet the bus and send someone the driver has not seen before, he/she should call the Transportation Department to notify them of the change.

Q. Should I call if my child will not be on the bus on a particular day or route?

A. Because of the large volume of students we transport, we request that parents of elementary and special needs students call to cancel transportation on a particular day or route. This saves time and worry for the driver, wondering why their children have not come to the bus.



Q. How does the driver know who my child is and where they belong?

A.



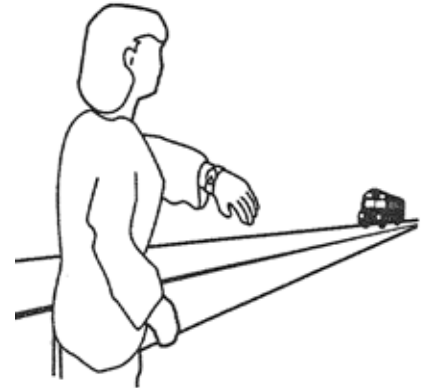
Several ways, first each driver has a student manifest that provides him/her with information such as name, grade, address, pickup or drop off point, time, school, and any special instructions. Examples of special instructions would be medical requirements, such as allergies, (Epi-pens). Besides these, the driver is in constant radio contact with the dispatcher. The dispatchers have access to all the data that you have supplied to the Transportation Department.

Q. On the first day of school, does the driver have time for my child?

A. Some schools stagger the kindergarten start days and the drivers have little difficulty handling the students. A transportation orientation day is organized by the school and the transportation department. Please request the date from your school. At this session parents and students are instructed on the transportation rules as well as a ride with their child on the bus. As well, they'll be instructed on how they should wait at the bus stop and how to cross safely in front of the bus.

Q. Why is the bus late and why wasn't I called?

- A. Some situations that cause the bus to be late include traffic, road closures, weather, vehicle breakdowns or circumstances from the prior bus route. In some instances, the bus is held up at the school waiting for students. The same holds true when picking up students. If 20 students are one minute late for the pickup, the bus will run 20 minutes late. This is very profound considering some buses can pick up as many as 60 students during the course of the morning routes. Since we operate close to 50 buses on 60 routes, transporting some 2100 students, it is virtually impossible to contact parents when a bus is late. However, the transportation department is in constant radio communication with all the buses. Should a driver foresee they will be 10 minutes behind schedule, he/she is required to inform the base and, in turn, the base notifies the school.



Q. How will I be notified of a change to my child's stop time or location?

- A. If the change is less than five minutes, the driver will notify your child of the change. If there is a change in stop time greater than five minutes, stop location or bus number, the transportation department will call and advise you.

Q. Can my child be dropped off at a different stop or go on another bus?

- A. Students must ride on their assigned buses only. Parents can request a different existing stop on the same route, but it must be consistent every day. Students are not allowed to go on other buses for reasons such as birthday parties, sleepovers, etc.

Q. My child's bus is over-crowded. Can some children be placed on a different bus?

- A. School bus sizes are stated in terms of passenger capacity for elementary-aged children. It is assumed that elementary students (K-4) will ride three to a seat and junior high students (5-12) will ride two to a seat. If the bus has three elementary or two high school students per seat, it may seem that the bus is over-crowded, but it will not, in fact, be over capacity. It is our goal to fully utilize all the space on the buses in our fleet.

Q. I can't see my child's bus stop from my house. How can I get the stop moved closer?

A. Bus stops are placed at centralized locations that can be safely accessed by a significant number of students to minimize the time, length and mileage of the routes. If you have concerns about your child's safety, you are encouraged to accompany your child to and from the bus stop or to arrange a neighborhood buddy to walk with a younger child. Students (K-4) in the division who live less than .8 kilometres and students less than 1.6 kilometres from their school do not receive transportation, therefore asking students to walk 800 metres or less to a bus stop is not considered unreasonable.



Q. Why are seat belts not required on school buses?

A. Seat belts are not required in school buses because research done by both the American and Canadian regulatory agencies had determined that compartmentalization was a better solution. Under this concept, seat backs in school buses are made high, wide, and thick. All metal surfaces are covered with thick foam padding. The seat is required to be anchored to the floor and will not pull loose during a collision. The students are less prone to injury by being bounced between the seats than being strapped in.

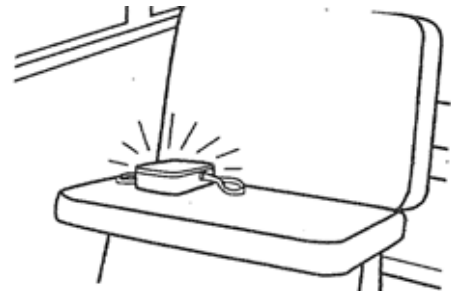


Compartmentalization works well for one, two or three students in a seat. Today's 39" seats can accommodate three younger students, two larger students or a combination of the two. Arranging and adjusting seat belts for this combination would be difficult, if

not impossible. As well it would be difficult for the driver to enforce students to put on their seat belts and keep them on. Also, compartmentalization, once it has done its energy-absorbing job, leaves the students free to escape the bus. Seat belts could leave students strapped in, perhaps upside down and in a bus that has caught on fire.

Q. What if my child left something on the bus? (e.g. books, an instrument, etc)?

A. Drivers check their buses at the end of each route. Items left on the bus will remain on the bus for several days and children are encouraged to ask the driver if they have found the item. After a certain period, drivers take unclaimed items to the office and at the end of the school year; the items are donated to a charity. You can help by labeling all of your child's belongings with his/her name and perhaps the school name.



Q. Where can I find more information on school bus transportation in the division?

A. You can find more information such as transportation policies and weather cancellations on our websites at www.srsd.mb.ca . As well you may call the Transportation Department at (204) 422-6222.

Procedures in the event of extreme weather

The decision to close schools and/or cancel transportation will be made by the CEO in consultation with the Transportation Supervisor.

An announcement will be posted on the website www.srsd.mb.ca

The decision will be communicated to the media:

CJOB 680 AM

CBC 990 AM

CBC 89.3 FM

CITI 92 FM

CKMM (Hot) 103

CKY 102 (Clear) FM

CFQX (QX) 104 FM

CJZZ (Cool) FM 99.1

CKSB (French)

CFWM (BOB) 99.9

CHSM Steinbach 96.7 FM

CHSM Steinbach 1250 AM

City TV

CKY TV

All parents and staff are asked to listen to the media for announcements regarding school closures and/or cancellation of transportation.

In the event that transportation is cancelled in the morning, this cancellation will apply for the whole day.

